An Update on Parks in Your Community
Council President Scott Peters, First District
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Neighborhood parks are among the most popular and most visible symbols of the City at work in our community. While the last few years have been challenging ones for the City, protecting and enhancing our regional and neighborhood parks is one of the highest priorities for me and my colleagues on the City Council, and I have made parks in Rancho Peñasquitos and Torrey Highlands a top priority. Here are some updates on our current efforts.

When I was first elected, the community was embroiled in turmoil over where to put a skate park. In 2005, we opened the skate park on Carmel Mountain Road on land adjacent to a park and ride, where traffic and noise could be easily absorbed. The facility has been an overwhelming success with young skateboarders and some not-so-young. This year, under the leadership of the Peñasquitos Recreation Council and its chairman, Bill Diehl, we are working on adding three 8-foot retractable awnings for skateboarders and their guests.

We also pushed hard to advance the construction of the Black Mountain Ranch Community Park, off of Black Mountain Road, which originally had been scheduled for 2007. We worked with the developer to install the four multipurpose sports fields, two parking lots, walkways and surrounding landscape and irrigation by September 2005. Field space is at a premium in our communities, so the early availability of additional fields is good news for local softball and baseball teams.

The second phase of construction will begin 2011 and include additional soccer fields in the eastern section of the park, basketball courts and additional tot lots. Phase three, which is projected be finished by 2015, will include a public recreation center and a community swimming pool. This year, we are working to ensure safe and convenient access in and out of the park once Carmel Valley Road opens to the east later this summer.

At Canyonside Park, we are working with the PQ Rec Council to install additional lights around the baseball fields. The recreation council has agreed to contribute $225,000 to this project.

This past fall, aging tot lot equipment at Ridgewood Park was removed by City Staff because of the possibility of injuries. Future developer funds are slated to build the equipment by 2010. This is far too long for our children to wait. I worked with the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board to use existing community funds from past development to cover the costs to install the equipment soon, with an agreement to reimburse the community funds with anticipated development funds in 2009.

Last October, we broke ground on the five-acre park Torrey del Mar Neighborhood Park, the first of two parks serving Torrey del Mar and Torrey Highlands, at the corner of

Kerry Lane and Torrey Del Mar Road. Construction is still on track for opening of the park this fall. Thanks to the cooperation of City staff and local home developers, we moved the scheduled opening of the park up by four years, from 2011 to 2007.

Soon we will also finish the "Linear Park" on Salmon River Road in Rancho Peñasquitos. Originally a simple strip of grass on a plot where County Water Authority owns easement rights to the land, Linear Park may soon feature an enclosed off-leash dog area. Dog owners in Peñasquitos presented the idea of an off-leash zone to the City last year, and quickly garnered the support of the community. The Park and Recreation department recently received final design plans for Linear Park and will soon submit them to the County Water Authority for review. The City Council will hear the item later this year, upon approval by the County board. I'll share more details as they are available.

Finally, this year, Mayor Sanders showed a commitment to parks with a budget largely avoiding further cuts. The Mayor assures us that existing service levels will remain constant at our parks and community centers. This is good news for the thousands of athletes and families that use our parks each day.